Snippets

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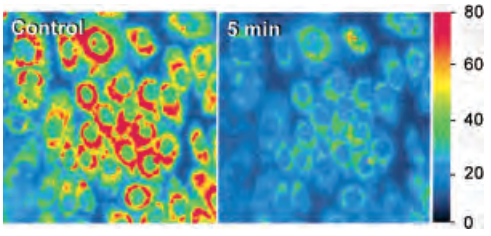
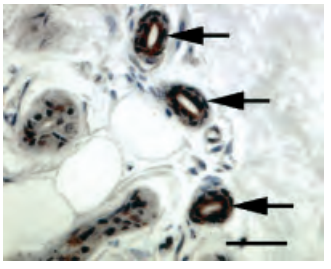
VITAMIN C – CHEMISTRY COUNTS



Meves and coworkers (p.1103) demonstrate that a vitamin C derivative (ascorbic-6-palmitate) – although it reduced cellular levels of reactive oxygen species formed with physiologic doses of UVB – promoted cellular toxicity related to its lipid component. The studies emphasize a multidimensional approach necessary for evaluating a new derivative of a known chemical. In his commentary (p.991), Pinnell discusses antioxidants in general, and the ways to understand the differences between oxidation in the lipid and non-lipid compartments of cells.

SWEATING ANTIBACTERIAL BULLETS

Sweating's role in thermoregulation is well established. A role in the innate immune system by its delivery of antimicrobial peptide is further developed by Gallo and coworkers (p.1090). LL-37, a member of the Cathelicidin family of peptides, is found in both glandular and ductal cells. LL-37 and demcidin were found to have antimicrobial activity against both gram positive and gram negative bacteria. Do we have to be careful about washing off these useful agents by too frequent bathing?



BLINDNESS AND ALOPECIA

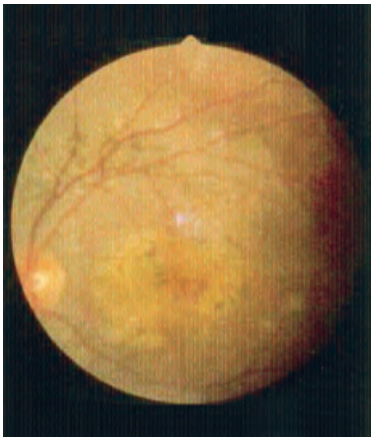
Pili torti and the early onset of alopecia preceded severe macular degeneration by decades in patients with mutations in P-cadherin. Sprecher *et al* (p.1210) show the role clinical acumen can play in the early identification of patients, which will be necessary for any type of preventive therapy.

WHEN NEGATIVE IS POSITIVE

Scientific journals are biased toward publishing positive results, but negative results *can be* positive results. The cyclooxygenase inhibitors (COXINHIB), by decreasing inflammatory response, may decrease tissue injury. However, portions of the inflammatory response may be essential to wound healing. Since COXINHIB are used in an increasing number of disorders and are being studied for the inhibition or retardation of skin malignancies, it is important to know if they inhibit wound healing. In the incisional wound healing study by Müller-Decker *et al* (p.1189), both COX-1 and COX-2 inhibitors did transiently delay reepithelialization of mouse skin, but neoangiogenesis, collagen deposition and the restoration of tensile strength were not affected. Results of similar studies in talking mammals will be of great interest.

LEARNING FROM WARTS

Clinical efficacy of an agent often leads to detailed studies of its mechanism which can broaden both the usefulness of the agent and our understanding of normal physiology and pathophysiology. Imiquimod is being used clinically for warts and other disorders, so understanding its mechanism of action on the immune system is reasonable. Worm *et al* (p.1059) found that an imidazoquinoline (R848) decreased IgE production in an interferon γ dependent fashion in blood mononuclear cells of both normals and those with atopic dermatitis or allergic rhinitis, suggesting the agent may have uses in IgE mediated disorders.



THALIDOMIDE – A SERIOUS DRUG

Thalidomide – after decades in limbo because of its horrendous skeletal side effects – is tentatively returning to the therapeutic armamentarium as an immunomodulating agent. In studies, control procedures will prevent pregnancy and birth defects; now, however, nueropathy, through an unclear mechanism, is a major side effect. In a prospective study of 135 dermatologic patients, Bastuji-Garin (p.1020) found a strong dose-relationship for neuropathy. This data will be useful for those using this agent.

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